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INFRASTRUCTURE

Training for Water Utility Business Units: USAID's Commercialization of Afghanistan Water and Sanitation Activity Program (CAWSA) is continuing its on-the-job training in four water utility Strategic Business Units. CAWSA completed GPS training for the Gardez Water Supply Department's technical unit head and the head of field technicians on how to collect key coordinates and leveling points that will be used to prepare digital maps of the distribution network and relevant infrastructure. These maps will incorporate critical maintenance planning information including the age, composition, and condition of system components. This activity will help the Gardez Water Supply Department improve its management of



A CAWSA technical engineer provides practical GPS training in the field to the Gardez Water Supply Department.

PHOTO: USAID/CAWSA

the water utility by providing critical information on the system infrastructure. USAID's project is helping utilities such as Gardez improve service delivery and efficiently provide clean, potable water for their customers.



Participants outline community-led total sanitation requirements and responsibilities.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

Community-led Total Sanitation: Ninety-two percent of Afghanistan's nearly 30 million people do not have access to proper sanitation. This has placed the country at the top of the list of "the worst places in the world for sanitation." About 25 percent of underfive children in Afghanistan are affected annually by diseases originating from poor and/or bad sanitation. In order to help address this problem, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Afghanistan are investing in projects that improve access to drinking water and proper sanitation.

A new approach, Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS), is currently being applied by USAID in six provinces in Afghanistan. The approach, developed by an Indian social scientist, is being utilized in about two dozen countries with notable results. The CLTS approach supports communities to build or improve safe, unsubsidized latrines, eventually leading the communities to stop the practice defecation without sanitation facilities. USAID's project is the first to implement this community-initiated sustainable hygiene and sanitation program. Approximately 114 people have been trained on CLTS approach in seven provinces. Now these trained Afghans are working to sensitize residents to maintain improved hygiene and sanitation; helping to improve the overall health of their communities.

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Health and Hygiene Training Closing Ceremony, Parwan Province. PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Ministry of Public Health Supports a Cleaner Future for Parwan: In cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program recently completed hygiene training that reached a total of 3,380 students and mothers in Parwan. Using the health and hygiene curricula developed by the MoPH's Community-based Health Care (CBHC) Department, trainers also distributed hand soap to trainees in 12 communities throughout the four districts prioritized for stabilization and development activities by USAID/LGCD. The closing ceremony was held on August 2.

Citizens in Priority Districts: On August 4, USAID/LGCD held a closing ceremony for a large-scale cash-for-work project to rehabilitate approximately 45km of irrigation canals running through in five village clusters in central Jalrez District, bringing farmers in 17 villages better access to irrigation water and a total of 278 unskilled laborers and 16 skilled laborers with 30-35 days of short-term employment. The District Governor, who worked closely with USAID's Local Governance and Community Development program to design and

implement the project, personally handed workers

their final wage payments. In the words of Hajji Zafarv

Cash For Work Irrigation Projects Benefits



The hall was packed for the closing ceremony of the Jalrez District canal cleaning project.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Khan, one of the farmers whose fields will benefit from the improved canals, "We really appreciate the projects being implemented by the local government ... all the residents of this village have worked and fed their families and have cleaned the canals, which the community couldn't afford to do alone." The LGCD program works to increase GIRoA legitimacy through better service delivery in underserved communities throughout Afghanistan.

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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Program Budget Training for 51 Government Budgetary Units Completed: EGGI and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) Budget Integration Reform Unit (BIRU) completed the training of 743 Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) budgetary unit employees in the basics of program budgeting. This ends the training required to prepare all 51 budgetary units for the full rollout of important reforms in the next budget cycle. The reform is a major component of the Public Financial Roadmap presented at the Kabul Conference in July, and is also a major structural reform benchmark in the new International Monetary Fund (IMF) program.



GIRoA Budgetary Unit staff receive training in program budgeting, Kabul.
PHOTO: USAID/EGGI

EGGI and BIRU employees conducted training sessions to help GIRoA employees develop program structures, strategic objectives, program objectives, and outputs and outcomes for their respective budgetary units. The trainings also included four modules on changes in the Program Budgeting process and updates on the MOF's future plan for this reform.



A truck loaded with Afghan goods prepares for travel at the Kabul Inland Customs Depot. Under APTTA, trucks will use electronic tracking devices.

PHOTO: USAID/TAFA

Historic Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement Signed: On July 18, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed a historic transit trade agreement that will reduce by half the amount of time it takes goods to cross the border between the two countries. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit-Trade Agreement (APTTA), once ratified by the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, will be a major overhaul of the 1965 agreement, the last transit agreement in place. APTTA updates and improves the joint transit system to reflect current economic conditions, infrastructure, technology, and transport practices. The new transit regime increases the number of transport routes available to trucks from both countries, lowering the cost of imports and making exports more competitive in the global market.

Unlike the 1965 agreement, APTTA does not limit Afghanistan and Pakistan to the two current trade routes and one railway system. APTTA provides for 10 additional transit corridors in Pakistan and eight new corridors in Afghanistan. This increased freedom of



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transit will link Pakistan to the Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and beyond to Kazakhstan and other key trading partners. Pakistan will also benefit from improved access to raw materials from Central Asia. Similarly, APPTA will link Afghanistan to the world via three Pakistani ports under designated routes. Afghan trucks will now be allowed to transport Afghan exports to any of the three Pakistan seaports (Karachi, Qasim, and Gwadar), load goods, and return with imports from third countries or Pakistan. Moreover, APTTA will allow Afghan exports to be transported to India and China.

Both countries agreed to increase cooperation to control informal trade and take measures to increase the modernity and security of the current transit system. Tracking devices will be installed on trucks to monitor their locations. Authorized agents, such as shippers and brokers, will provide financial guarantees for payment of customs levies of transiting imports. These will be released once transit imports exit the transit country. Both countries will also provide each other with Customs-to-Customs information on clearance of cargo at their final destination point.

TAFA assisted in eliminating key policy and technical bottlenecks obstructing the signing of APTTA. During the final round of negotiations, which took place in July 2010, TAFA advisors assisted the negotiating team to understand the various alternatives and commitments available, particularly concerning the revised dispute resolution mechanism and measures to counter smuggling.

USAID Launches Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Economy: This month, USAID officially began its assistance to the Ministry of Economy (MOEC) by providing an Economic Policy Advisor to support the Minister. Since joining, the EGGI advisor has supported the Minister's participation in a number of high-level events and has begun a two-month functional audit assessment to better understand the core functions of the MOEC at the central and provincial levels. This will help inform EGGI's strategic advice to the Minister on the directions for reform in the MOEC over the medium term.

EDUCATION

Consensus Reached to Improve the Masters in Public Health Curriculum: A USAID-supported one-day "Curriculum Consensus Workshop" challenged participants to define the attributes and processes that will culminate with an internationally respected curriculum for an Afghan Masters in Public Health (MPH) degree. The workshop involved representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education, USAID, Kabul Medical University (KMU), lecturers in public health, Jhpiego, WHO, and international



Curriculum Consensus Workshop participants.
PHOTO: USAID/HEP

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experts in curriculum development and public health. The facilitated discussions were at times lively as one Afghan senior lecturer, striving to be heard over other voices, shouted, "This curriculum," while waving the book that defines medical education curriculum in Afghanistan, "should be tossed in the trash! We are here to discuss how we can better prepare teaching for our students so that they really learn something!"

The workshop, held on July 26 at KMU, included presentations and participative group work facilitated by the Higher Education Project (HEP) medical education staff. Curricular reform in medical education, clinical skills training, and public health can prepare Afghan doctors to better attend to the country's urgent health needs. Health statistics have improved since 2001 thanks in great part to the significant investment of many millions of dollars by the American people, through USAID and other donors.

At the end of the workshop, participants were in agreement regarding the look and feel of a curriculum, and the processes involved in developing the courses and content. As Dr. Yosoufpur, a KMU senior professor stated, "I hope that we will be able to implement the solid thinking that we discussed." All of the participants agreed that development of a robust MPH curriculum will take a long time and that now the hard work will begin.

BESST Training of Senior Trainers of ALPT

Completed: USAID's BESST (Building Education Support Systems for Teachers) project is working with the Ministry of Education's Teacher Education Department to plan and establish a program for primary education teachers to study and complete the equivalent of secondary education while they continue teaching. To prepare for the Accelerated Learning Program for Teachers' (ALPT's) roll-out in eleven provinces of Afghanistan, BESST held workshops to train 55 senior trainers from July 27 to August 5. The workshop used practical, hands-on lessons to prepare the senior trainers to train ALPT facilitators. During the last week of training, thirteen teachers without a



Primary education teachers study and complete their secondary school equivalent while they continue teaching.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST

secondary school education attended the training to help the senior trainers test the study guides and facilitation techniques by participating in mock ALPT study groups.

The senior trainers then returned to their respective provinces, prepared to train the ALPT facilitators. Once the facilitators are prepared, they will begin tutoring ALPT participants and conducting the ALPT study groups in most districts in the eleven provinces supported by BESST. Approximately 11,000 teachers have registered and are ready to participate in ALPT.



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Beginning in September 2010, ALPT will provide teachers with tutoring, small group study, and subject-area study guides for self-directed study. Teachers will be continually assessed by taking standardized exams developed by the Ministry of Education for each subject and each grade level. Passing these exams will certify each participant as having satisfied the academic requirements for entry into Teacher Training Colleges.

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